



Hinsdale, NH – Brattleboro, VT
Connecticut River Bridge Project
NH Project #12210C; VT Project # BF A004 (152)

Existing Bridges Subcommittee Meeting #8
October 28, 2020
9:00 a.m.

Join Zoom Meeting
<http://bit.ly/Oct28HBEB20>
Telephone: (646) 558-8656
Meeting ID: 898 2113 0967
Password: 110 407

AGENDA

1. Minutes of June 25, 2020
2. Project Updates
3. Feedback on October 15th Online Public Forum
4. Work Scope with University of Massachusetts Amherst and Future Public Involvement
5. Preliminary Concepts from University of Massachusetts Amherst
6. Next Meeting
7. Public Comment
8. Adjourn



Hinsdale, NH – Brattleboro, VT Connecticut River Bridge Project

Existing Bridges Subcommittee Meeting #7

Web Conference Meeting

MINUTES

June 25, 2020

Subcommittee Attendees: Kathryn Lynch, *Co-Chair, Town of Hinsdale*; Patrick Moreland, *Co-Chair, Town of Brattleboro*; Jason Cooper, *Friends of West River Trail*; Mark Carignan, *Brattleboro Police Department*; Steve Diorio, *Hinsdale Board of Selectmen*; Prudence MacKinney, *Formerly of Vermont Department of Health*; Charles Rataj, *Town of Hinsdale Police Department*; Ed Smith, *Hinsdale Economic Development Representative*; Sharon Smith, *Hinsdale Historical Society*.

Staff and Technical Assistance: Josif Bicja and Edward Weingartner, *Hoyle, Tanner and Associates*; Chris Company, *Windham Regional Commission*; J. B. Mack, *Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC)*; Tony King, Don Lyford, Brett McCrea and Trent Zanes, *NHDOT*; Christopher Baker, *Vermont Agency of Transportation*.

Guests: Bob Audette, *Brattleboro Reformer*; Representative Michael Abbott, *NH Cheshire District 1*; Deborah George, *Owner of George's Field Shopping Plaza*; David Hiler, *Whetstone Station Restaurant and Brewery*; Nate Kraus-Mallett, Christopher Ramage, Robert Ryan, *University of Massachusetts at Amherst*; Karli Schrade, *Groundworks Collaborative*; Kathy Urffer, *Connecticut River Conservancy*;

Kathryn Lynch called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. J. B. Mack conducted roll call of all of the Subcommittee attendees.

I. Meeting Minutes of April 30, 2020

Motion: To approve the minutes of April 30, 2020.

Motion by Steve Diorio, seconded by Ed Smith. Approved by unanimous vote by roll call.

II. Project Updates

Don Lyford reported that the advertising date for the new bridge is still scheduled for August 2020, but there is a possibility that some of the right-of-way work on the Vermont side of the river will delay the advertising date. He stated that this shouldn't affect the construction schedule which is slated to start in 2021 and conclude in 2023.

Trent Zanes showed the preliminary plans documenting the draft design of NH Route 119 and Mountain Road on the New Hampshire side of the Connecticut River and its connections to the George's Field Shopping Plaza (George's Field), the Charles Dana bridge, and the new proposed bridge. Trent discussed potential options for accommodating pedestrian travel with sidewalk and crosswalks from the Charles Dana bridge area up to the George's Field Shopping Plaza.

Jason Cooper expressed that it would be his preference to have as few crosswalk crossings as possible. Trent Zanes said that NHDOT would need to study slopes in the area and explore options a little further and would report back on NHDOT's final recommendation. Different alternatives were shown showing potential sidewalk connections to George's Plaza. Deborah George expressed interest in the "middle" option which she said she could coordinate with some work she plans to have done to the George's Field parking lot. Deborah George asked a question about intersection signalization at NH Route 119 and George's Field and a question about the adequacy of the length of the left hand turning lane for eastbound NH Route 119 traffic turning into George's Field. Trent Zanes replied that there is no planned signalization at the George's Field intersection and the left hand turning lane is slightly shorter than the existing lane, but expected to accommodate traffic according to NHDOT's models. Kathy Urffer asked about drainage from the north side of NH Route 119 to the south side and Trent Zanes showed the drainage symbology on the plans. A question was asked about the ability for NHDOT to accommodate some parking near the Charles Dana bridge as there is a likelihood that people will want to park and walk on the existing bridges and Hinsdale Island. Trent Zanes responded that no parking was incorporated into the design, adding that there doesn't appear to be sufficient space for parking. Deborah George stated that people could park behind George's Field off of Mountain Road. J. B. Mack asked whether there were bicycle accommodations on Mountain Road or NH Route 119 and made a point about the bridges accommodating bicyclists that may want to travel up NH Route 119 to connect to the Fort Hill Branch rail trail. Trent Zanes responded that the design incorporates shoulders.

III. Proposed Rehabilitation of Existing Bridges – Presented by Hoyle, Tanner & Associates

Don Lyford introduced Josif Bicja and Edward Weingartner from Hoyle, Tanner and Associates (HTA). He explained that the firm was hired to develop recommendations and cost estimates relating to the rehabilitation of the Anna Hunt Marsh and Charles Dana bridges. Josif Bicja and Edward Weingartner presented a slide presentation to the Subcommittee that gave an overview of the bridges and then discussed bridge inspection findings, rehabilitation recommendations, and the process for reviewing their recommendations with federal and state agencies relating to cultural and natural resource standards and impacts. They reported that the anticipated schedule for the project will involve finalizing preliminary plans in the winter of 2020, develop contract plans by the spring of 2023, advertise the project in the summer of 2023 and begin construction in the spring of 2024 or as soon as the new bridge is operational so the existing bridges can be closed. The work is expected to take two construction seasons addressing one bridge at a time.

A question was asked about the expected lifespan of the bridge. Edward Weingartner responded that the proposed precast deck is expected to have a lifespan of 30 years. Deborah George and Prudence MacKinney asked about the deck surface and whether there were any surficial applications that could change the color or texture of the surface to help delineate ways for bicyclists and pedestrians. Edward Weingartner said he would conduct some research and look into potential options, but he was not aware of any at the time. J. B. Mack asked what the load bearing on the bridges would be and would the bridge rehabilitation project be able to bear the load of non-traditional bridge amenities such as flower boxes or appurtenances hung from the bridge superstructure. He explained how some of these amenities have been discussed by the Subcommittee with students from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Josif Bicja responded that the rehabilitation will be designed to support emergency response vehicles and would need to know the exact weight and location (relative to the span) of the proposed appurtenances to evaluate whether that would be allowed or not. Ed Smith asked if HTA had considered lighting for the bridges or emergency response call boxes on the island and asked for clarification on what NHDOT's plan was for providing electricity to the island. Brett McRea responded that NHDOT does not plan on being responsible for electricity run to the island because it will no longer be on a state route. J. B. Mack said he had some other

questions he would like to send HTA, but he'll do that by e-mail after the meeting and thanked HTA for the presentation.

IV. Draft Scope of Work for University Students

J. B. Mack gave an overview of a document included in the packet entitled, "Hinsdale Brattleboro Existing Bridges Project - Statement of Expectations for Student Participation in Project." He explained that he had worked on the draft with consultation from the Town of Hinsdale, Town of Brattleboro and the Windham Regional Commission and that all parties have discussed splitting the cost of a stipend to one or two graduate students from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. One of the students that is interested in the project, Chris Ramage, is a graduate student seeking a Masters degree in Landscape Architecture. The other student that is interested, Nate Kraus-Mallett, is pursuing a Masters degree in Architecture. Patrick Moreland and Kathryn Lynch expressed support for the scope of work as outlined in the document. The Subcommittee had no further comments on the document and there was consensus to present the document to the University of Massachusetts Amherst as the proposed scope of technical assistance that one or two students would use as a guideline for assisting the Hinsdale Brattleboro Existing Bridges Subcommittee.

J. B. Mack introduced Nate Kraus-Mallett, Christopher Ramage and Robert Ryan to the Subcommittee. Each representative from the University of Massachusetts gave a little background about themselves and discussed their interest in the project. The students described how the project would be the focus of their theses. Robert Ryan discussed the work of the undergraduate class that provided some design ideas to the Subcommittee earlier this year and talked about how this would be a logical extension to that work. He noted that he would administer the stipend on behalf of the students should the work go forward. J. B. Mack and Christopher Campany noted that their contributions to the proposed stipend is contingent on NHDOT and VTrans allowing the regional planning commissions to use some of their planning funds towards the stipend.

V. Next Steps

The next steps identified at the meeting were for the HTA team to look into some of the questions generated during the meeting, research them and get back to the Subcommittee with answers at a future Subcommittee meeting. In addition, SWRPC and WRC were asked to work with the Town of Hinsdale, Town of Brattleboro and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst to look into the feasibility of setting up a student stipend, determine if there will be one or two students, and develop a timeline for executing the scope of work.

VI. Next Meeting

J. B. Mack was asked to reach out to the Subcommittee Co-Chairs when the HTA and student stipend efforts have made sufficient progress to report back and then a decision would be made on the next meeting.

VII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

J. B. Mack

DRAFT

To stay compliant with NH public meeting guidelines when using a remote meeting format, we are obliged to read the following script so please bear with us.

AUTHORITY FOR CONDUCTING A MEETING ELECTONICALLY

In **Emergency Order #12**, issued by the Governor of the State of New Hampshire pursuant to **Executive Order #2020-04**, certain provision of **RSA 91-A** regulating the operation of public body meetings have been waived during the declared COVID-19 State of Emergency.

Specifically:

The requirement that a quorum of a public body be physically present except in an emergency requiring immediate action under **RSA 91-A: 2, III (b)**;

The requirement that each part of a meeting of a public body be audible or otherwise discernible to the public at the location specified in the meeting notice as the location of the meeting under **RSA 91-A: 2, III (c)**.

Provided, however that the public body must:

Provide access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means;

Provide public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting;

Provide a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access; and

Adjourn the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting.

This meeting will be conducted using the online meeting platform, Zoom. The public may view the meeting online by going to **www.zoom.us/join** and enter the meeting ID: 824 3091 6177 passcode: 362148.

If you are unable to, or wish not to attend the meeting on line, you may call the toll free # **(888) 475-4499** and enter meeting ID: 824 3091 6177 to listen to the meeting.

If you are having trouble accessing the meeting, you may call **(603) 357-0557** for assistance.

The meeting will now be called to order.